

Supporting and Celebrating Breastfeeding Mothers Focus of August 3 Conference in Dover

DOVER – Although breastfeeding is a natural process, many moms need help, and have a lot of questions. Other moms who are currently breastfeeding or have in the past, along with professionals who have experience with promoting and consulting on lactation practices, can be great resources. The Division of Public Health (DPH) is bringing these groups together in one place to support breastfeeding and its many benefits.



Registration is now open for the DPH WIC Program's 2017 WIC World Breastfeeding Celebration. The event will be held at Dover Downs Conference Center in Dover on Aug. 3, 2017, to commemorate World Breastfeeding Week, which is Aug. 1 – 7, 2017. The conference theme is "Sustaining Breastfeeding Together."

This daylong conference brings together breastfeeding partners from across the state as well as national speakers and community members to celebrate the many benefits breastfeeding offers mom and baby. Sessions include, The Role of Implicit Bias in Breastfeeding Disparities, Grassroots Innovation and Best Practices, Breastfeeding Support for African-American Families, Promoting, Protecting and Preserving Breastfeeding, and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome-Breastfeeding Support for Mothers and Babies.

The conference will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with registration starting at 8:30 a.m. Registration is free and

will remain open through the day of the event. For more information or to register, contact Ida Lewis at 302-741-2900 or via email at Ida.Lewis@delaware.gov.

The WIC Breastfeeding Celebration also serves to highlight August as National Breastfeeding Month. "Breastfeeding is important for so many reasons," said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. "It starts infants on a healthy life course because it is the optimal nutrition for infants and protects them from many illnesses and diseases."

Breastfeeding protects babies from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), diarrhea, ear infections, pneumonia, allergies, and asthma. Babies who are breastfed exclusively for six months are less likely to become obese. The benefits of breastfeeding are dose-related; the more breast milk a baby receives, the greater the protection for both mother and baby. Mothers who breastfeed have less risk of breast and ovarian cancers, and lose pregnancy weight faster.

Major medical organizations including the American Academy of Pediatrics, World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, among others, recommend that babies receive only breast milk for the first six months of life and that breastfeeding continue for at least the baby's first year, and for as long as mom and baby wish. Of Delaware infants born in 2013, 18.9 percent were breastfed exclusively through six months, compared to 22.3 percent nationally and the Healthy People 2020 goal of 25.5 percent. At one year of age, 24.5 percent of Delaware infants born in 2013 were breastfed, compared to 30.7 percent nationally and the Healthy People 2020 goal of 34.1 percent.

While still below the national average, Delaware continues to make progress in breastfeeding support due to the collaboration of health systems, businesses, state agencies and private citizens.

- Breastfeeding support in the workplace, including flexible break time and private space to pump, has been legislatively mandated for all employers and employees in the state.
- Delaware child care regulations require breastfeeding support in both center and family-based care.
- In 2015, Delaware became the third state in the nation to eliminate formula gift bags in all hospitals.
- Delaware ranks second in the nation in maternity practices supportive of infant nutrition and care, as measured by the CDC's mPINC survey. This is due to the extensive efforts of labor and delivery hospitals on breastfeeding quality improvement.
- Four out of six labor and delivery hospitals in Delaware have been designated as Baby Friendly, an international designation which recognizes facilities that provide the information confidence and skills to support infant feeding and mother-baby bonding: Beebe Healthcare, Bayhealth Kent General Hospital, Bayhealth Milford Memorial Hospital and Christiana Care Health System. Approximately 79% of births in Delaware now occur in facilities designated as Baby-Friendly.
- 712 health care practitioners from OB/GYN, family practice and pediatrics offices across the state have been trained in breastfeeding best practices.
- Two major annual events, the Delaware State Fair and the Firefly Music Festival, have incorporated breastfeeding-friendly areas to support families attending the festivities.

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now occur in facilities designated as Baby-Friendly. Quality improvement efforts related to breastfeeding support at Saint Francis Hospital and Nanticoke General Hospital.

For more information on breastfeeding, visit the Breastfeeding Coalition of Delaware at www.delawarebreastfeeding.org/, or on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/DEbreastfeeding/>, the DPH WIC page at <http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/chca/dphwicbfhom01.html> or the CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/>.

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.